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Maricopa

CHAPTER VI

TIME RECKONING, DIRECTIONS, COLORS, AND NUMBERS

ANNALS

The Maricopa community was in possession of calendar sticks identical with those discovered by Russell among the Pima. Lumholtz discovered one, "the only one existing in the tribe," among the Papago near Tucson.[1] The Maricopa examples, bearing a series of notches like the other sticks, were no more than mnemonic devices: each notch represented the passage of a year, the owner being expected to remember the events of that year. A few additional scratches and dots interpolated between some of the year-marks helped indicate certain significant occurrences, but were so simple and non-pictorial as to give no clue to anyone else what the events may have been.

The years have been counted in this fashion "since the stars fell." Before that date (November 13, 1833) nothing of the sort was known. My informant believed the device invented by an old man of the Maricopa community. "At the meeting house an old man told the young people what happened each year. That is how it began. He decided he wanted the young people to remember." Nevertheless, there can be no doubt of their origin in common with the Pima records, identical in form and likewise beginning with the year of the meteoric shower. There is no certainty that even the Pima records are older than 1833. To be sure, Russell, after mentioning the five Pima sticks he located, and stating that the two explained to him began with 1833, writes: "There are traditions of older sticks that have been lost or buried with their keepers." This may mean that traditionally the records date from earlier times, but I would interpret it as no more than the statement I record below from the Maricopa, that sticks

[1] Russell, *Pima Indians*, pp. 34 f.; Lumholtz, *New Trails in Mexico*, p. 73.

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other than those seen, not earlier records, had been destroyed. If there existed record sticks older than this date, it seems surprising that all the Maricopa and Pima examples known should date uniformly from this particular event. My conclusion is that all the sticks of both peoples were derived from a single prototype made after 1833. It may well be that the device merely represents in material form an older custom of reciting annals at village meetings. The solitary Papago example apparently began with 1842.

171 173 216 805

The time the stars fell is called xŏm^ce'kwàsll,^, "stars fall." They said the stars rained all over the sky. Then no more stars could be seen for a while that night; then they reappeared. They never gave a reason for this. This was the only time it happened; fourteen years before I [Kutox] was born [the correct date: he was born in 1847 or 8].[2]

Formerly several old people had these notched records, but they were burned when they died. One alone remains. There were no comparable records marked on skin nor knotted cords.

211 805

The solitary example remaining was in the hands of Mai'nyă'n an elderly man, whose father was Kaveltcadom and mother Kohuana. But the device is not assignable to either of these tribes: it was solely a product of the mixed Maricopa community. He began to keep the record in 1873–74, having learned the earlier annals from an old man of the other mixed Maricopa community at Lehi, near Mesa. His recollection of events was acknowledged to be good by Kutox, "but sometimes he makes mistakes and we have to correct him." He is training his sons to continue it, "but they don't pay attention." The stick itself is a store product, which he has had for some years and uses as a staff. (It is four feet long and an inch in diameter.) The notches, which are spaced about one-half inch apart, are little square pits, made with the knife-point, with every tenth year marked by a longer scratch through it. It begins with 1833. He makes each mark at the end of the year, i.e., in February. When I first broached the matter of inspecting his stick on February 7, 1930, he said he had

[2] All the old men know their ages exactly; a most astonishing fact for an illiterate people. The reason is obvious: they know the year of their birth as recorded on these sticks.

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Kohuana

211 805 not yet added the mark for the year just passed; when I saw it on February 10, it included the 1929–30 mark.

The annals as he recited them follow. I was able to get from 173 him no more than the events of the specially marked years.[3]

211 805

1838 The first Kohuana group came here [to the Gila].

1848 The Maricopa went to Yuma to fight.

1852 An old man [Bismarck] was born this year.

1857–58 The Yuma came to Sacate to fight. [This agrees with the date from Yuma, Mohave, and documentary sources.]

1859–60 The informant [Mai'nyĂ'n] was born.

1862–63 The first white man to have a store at Casa Blanca [Sweetwater] was captured by Texans. Soldiers came and fought near Tucson. [The reference is to Civil War episodes.]

1863–64 Made a peace treaty with the Yavapai.

1864–65 The Yavapai came down and stole horses; warfare started again.

1865–66 Some men here [including Kutox] were taken to Fort McDowell as scouts.

1869–70 The Maricopa left the Salt River opposite Phoenix and came here [in the Gila-Salt confluence].

[124] [3] His wife objected. After placating her, I persuaded him to let me photograph and sketch the stick, and wheedled the meanings of the specially marked years. But no persuasion would make him go counter to his wife's wishes and recount the whole systematically.

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Halchidhoma

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1871–72 The Pima fought among themselves.

1873–74; 1874–75 The Yavapai were all captured. This year they killed all the Yavapai in the cave.[4]

1875–76 The Yavapai were concentrated at Fort McDowell.

1876–77 Halchidhoma at Sacate (?) lost a race to the Pima. [Russell, (*op. cit.*, p. 56) cites this "in the spring of 1877" as the first race between Pima and Gila Maricopa.]

1877–78 "About" fifty-two Maricopa and Pima went to the Mohave. Eclipse of the sun.[5]

1878–79 Measles killed many children.

1879–80 (The special mark a mistake?)

1882–83 Raced with the kicking-ball against the Pima.

1883–84 Measles again.

1887–88 Earthquake.[6] Established the boundary of the present reservation.

[4] Russell gives the date of the slaughter in the cave as December 28, 1872 (*Pima Indians*, p. 54).

[5] Solar eclipse of July 29, 1878, visible as a marked partial eclipse in southern Arizona (Abbe, *Solar Eclipse of July, 1878*, p. 61).

[6] This is the earthquake of May 3, 1887 (Heck, *Earthquake History of the United States*, p. 51); this was "the only earthquake in southern Arizona in historic times, according to old timers in the district" (Hawley, *Prehistoric Pottery*, p. 549).

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1888–89 Another race with the Pima.

1889–90; 1890–91 Kicking-races with the Pima, won by the Maricopa each year.

1891–92 (No data.)

1893–94 Built the church here [near Laveen].

1896–97 Established the day-school here.

1899–1900 Snowed here for the first time that the informant knows; it lay four inches deep.

1918 Influenza epidemic that winter: many died.

1921–22 A man here murdered his wife.

1922–23 Made the big irrigation canal on the reservation boundary.

CALENDAR

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The Maricopa year began in late January or early February with the budding of the trees. In 1930 the owner of the calendar stick, as noted above, marked its beginning sometime between February 7th and 10th.

The year begins when the yellow blossoms appear on the cottonwoods (late January). The star xanấo' appears at this time [information from Last Star]. The year starts in the spring when the trees bud leaves (about the second or third week of February) [Kutox].

Four seasons of the year (mat'a'mk) were recognized: bink, spring; n,akâpi'l, summer; iyo'rck, autumn; xatcw'rak, winter.

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There is just the possibility that macxipa's and mavi's are from the calendric system of some other Yuman tribe confused in this mixed community with Maricopa nomenclature. 805 [221]

Shorter intervals were indicated by counting nights, not days as we would, or by the moon's phase. The time for a dance, e.g., was fixed by saying, "You sleep four (or whatever) nights and on the fourth day come." Or they would say, "We will have our dance when it is full moon—or when the moon just appears." Neither knotted cords nor notched sticks were used for the purpose. [211]

The intervals of the night were also indicated. The night was supposed to be divided into four parts, significant for dream experiences. The first and last quarter were productive of evil dreams; the second and possibly the third were the favorable quarters. These parts were named n,axa'vŏk, "went down," evening; tinyă'mko'rŭm, "night (black)old," middle of the night; xacipa'nĭk, "nearing," before dawn; kwăliyo'ŭg, dawn. 805 828 [192]

CONSTELLATIONS AND NATURAL PHENOMENA

Maricopa star lore was inconsiderable. The major constellations, known also to other Yumans, were recognized, but equally obvious ones, such as Cassiopeia and Gemini, had no names. A few trivial tales were associated with the star clusters, but the esoteric values attached to them in southern California were unknown here. 821 [171] [538]

For four, possibly five, of the six stars mentioned below, the significant position was dawn rising, not as is our customary mode of reference, evening ascension. Four of them were observed in autumn or winter.

The general cosmogonic notion was that there was a duplicate of this world above the sky. This was not the land of the dead, which lay in the west. It functioned in the myths and provided an explanation for the movement of the sun, but otherwise had no particular bearing on affairs of our world. 772 [775] [773] [821]

It is said that far above the sky is a place exactly like this world. There are people there doing the same things as here, and all the stars we see here are du-

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Shamans performed their feats at these celebrations.

In times of starvation they would go to other tribes to sing for them in order to receive gifts. The Pima also came in this fashion when they knew the Maricopa had plenty. Several days before the Maricopa set out they sent one of their number to the host village, provided with as many sticks as there were families intending to visit. A Pima man, acting for the hosts, collected an identical number to aid his memory. After the group arrived, these two told off each Maricopa family to the care of a Pima household. The latter would feed them in the evening and after the meal all gathered to dance. During the dance the Pima made gifts to their visitors: beads, baskets, bundles of mesquite beans or wheat, great jugs of sahuaro syrup, horses, and cattle. After their return the Maricopa would trade these among themselves until each had what he lacked.[2]

The Mountain Killdeer song had two disparate performances associated with it; one a display of power, the other a dance. In the display according to Kutox, the singer caused models of butterflies to flutter in time to his tune. A circular, roofless enclosure of willow poles was built, walled in with leafy branches. Across the top ran a series of parallel strings along which many yellow butterflies, cut out of mountain sheep skin, were tied. The singer sat at the center of the enclosure, which was about twenty feet in diameter and seven feet high. Others also sat within it to help him sing. As he sang, he beat on an inverted basket with one hand, scraping a stick (a foot long) on it with the other. "This made the butterflies look as though they were fluttering, as though they were dancing." This was simply a feat, not for curing.

The dance form coupled with the Mountain Killdeer song was used in the war dance (the performance preparatory to setting out to war), but also on other occasions. At the latter, Pima attended and a clown took part. Again the singer was seated. The dancers remained in hiding until he began to beat his basket: they then came forward in single file. Ten girls and ten young

[2] I was not told of the guest assuming the host's name, as recorded by Russell (*Pima Indians*, p. 171).